Delaware Department of Technology and Information

Letter to the Editor

Don't Forget About Cybersecurity

Delaware Secretary of Education Dr. Susan Bunting and Chief Information Officer James Collins

Delaware's economy is based on innovation, and technology takes center stage. To be prepared to meet future demands, our state must focus on building a pipeline of talented security professionals.

Cybersecurity is one of the most pressing issues facing businesses and governments today. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security estimates that the cost of cybercrime is $400 billion a year and trending upward. At the same time, the available jobs in cybersecurity are on the rise. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates a 37 percent growth in cybersecurity jobs by 2022.

Governor Carney has made cybersecurity a top priority of this administration. This past summer he signed cybersecurity legislation to improve consumer protections associated with breaches of security involving personal information. House Substitute 1 for House Bill 180 added provisions to the law to protect citizen information commonly used by criminals to perpetrate identity theft and fraud. The legislation also ensures that Delawareans are notified and afforded credit monitoring in the event of a serious cyber-incident.

The importance of cybersecurity also is why Delaware is providing students with opportunities to get real-world experience that sparks interest in information technology, including cybersecurity careers. For example, the Delaware Pathways program provides students the opportunity to explore careers and see what today's workforce really looks like. Information technology programs of study include computer science and Cisco networking.

In late July, the Governor Carney announced CyberStart, an innovative cybersecurity training partnership between the SANS Institute and the State of Delaware. This partnership provides students an opportunity to test their aptitude through a no-cost online game of discovery. Nearly 360 Delaware students participated, four of whom ranked in the top 50 nationally. In recognition of his commitment to innovation and dedication to increasing information security, Governor Carney was recently honored by the SANS Institute with the 2017 Difference Makers Award.

During October's National Cyber Security Awareness Month, Governor Carney also announced the official launch of Delaware's NSA Day of Cyber School Challenge. This is another opportunity for our students to participate in a free, statewide program designed to ignite interest in cybersecurity by enabling them to test drive occupations with the fully-funded online cyber security career exploration platform.

The Day of Cyber Challenge provides an exciting platform for Delaware students to start thinking about cybersecurity and related fields early, so we can better prepare them to have the foundation they need to compete in an increasingly globalized workforce. The program is running through March 31. Thus, we encourage schools, organizations, and students who may be interested to register. You can learn more at digiknow.dti.delaware.gov.

To prepare Delaware's students for success in college, career and life, we must align academic programming with the workforce needs in our state and the global economy. These types of opportunities expose students to information technology careers, and we hope ignite vocational interests they will want to explore further. The jobs of the future are inextricably linked to technology and we want to prepare our students now to not only be successful, but to thrive in the work environment of tomorrow.

We would be remiss if we didn't take this opportunity to remind everyone that cybersecurity is the responsibility of us all, not only our students. During this busy holiday season, as you are snapping up great deals online, stay vigilant. Don't forget that cyber criminals are busy too. Stay informed and don't take chances with your personal information. Check out digiknow.dti.delaware.gov for more tips.

We wish everyone a happy and cyber-safe holiday season!